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Letter dated 16 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I transmit to you herewith a letter dated 16 March 2003 from Mr. Naji Sabri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the grave consequences of the withdrawal of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission and reaffirming Iraq's legitimate right of self-defence.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Aldouri**
Permanent Representative

03-28538 (E) 180303 180303

Annex to the letter dated 16 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to my letter of 13 March 2003, in which I requested you to intervene immediately to revoke the order to withdraw the United Nations observers from their posts along the Iraq-Kuwait border and instruct them to return to their duties laid down in paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), according to which the mission's mandate was "... to deter violations of the boundary through its presence in and surveillance of the demilitarized zone and to observe any hostile or potentially hostile action mounted from the territory of one State against the other".

Most unfortunately, the Secretariat of the United Nations has not taken any step to redeploy the United Nations observers in their observation posts in the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait in order to perform their duties, as mandated in the Security Council resolutions. On the contrary, the evacuation of the United Nations observers to Kuwait has continued, in addition to the closing of the mission headquarters in Baghdad and the transfer of its stores to Kuwait. This measure is out of keeping with the responsibility of the United Nations to preserve international peace and security, runs counter to the relevant Security Council resolutions and imperils Iraq's national security.

In view of the escalation of American threats of aggression against Iraq; the increased United States and British military massing in Kuwait and in the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait; the opening by the Kuwaiti authorities and the American forces of breaches in the fence separating Iraq and Kuwait with a view to aggression against Iraq via the demilitarized zone; and the dropping by American aircraft, on the Iraqi side of the demilitarized zone, in the vicinity of the port and town of Umm Qasr, of leaflets containing threats of occupation of the port and the city, I wish to inform you that the Iraqi authorities will take the necessary steps to exercise their legitimate right of self-defence, pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to protect the area of the port and city of Umm Qasr, the lives and property of Iraqi citizens and public property.

(*Signed*) Naji **Sabri**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq